

## THE IMPORTANCE OF POETRY

By Donald L. Hill

No age recognizes all the facets of its own genius and supports each as it deserves. People support what they can easily understand and respond to. No doubt it is unreasonable to expect them to do anything else. Most of the best poetry of the half-century just past has been hard to read, and most people have therefore been indifferent to it. It is only through the most heroic efforts of editors, poets, and readers of poetry — that tiny minority — that the best poetry of the period has been published at all. The job has been done chiefly by the non-profit (indigent) little magazines, and among these the most brilliant accomplishment is that of *Poetry*. What well-known poets think of *Poetry* can be gathered by a glance at the twelve testimonials inside the cover of the issue for September, 1956 (vol. 88, no. 6). Here are a couple of samples:

It has been fortunate for the English-speaking world that a great age of poetry has for almost a half-century been accompanied by the continuance of such a magazine. *Poetry* has a tradition unrivalled by any other similar journal of our time, and was the first mouthpiece of poems which have turned the course of our literature.... (Vernon Watkins)

I don't believe many people in the U.S.A. realise how important *Poetry* looks to people abroad: I mean, to English-speaking poetry lovers and lovers of poetry who read English. There is nothing quite like it anywhere else: *Poetry* has had imitators, but has so far survived them all. It is an American Institution. To poetry-readers abroad it is still the magazine to which we look first, to make us aware of whatever new poetic talent appears in the U.S.A.... (T. S. Eliot)

There have never been many magazines devoted wholly to poetry, either here or in England, and the very few that have deserved comparison with *Poetry* have been short-lived. *Poetry* is important primarily because it has managed for forty-four years to print the early work of very nearly all of the best poets writing in English.

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## NEWSPAPER PICTURE FILES ON FILM

By Agnes Henebry

Many photographs on file in a newspaper library are used repeatedly. Others are filed on the chance that they will be used when the person is in the news again. Still others are saved for their historical value or are to be used only on such occasions as anniversaries, in feature stories, etc.

The Decatur *Herald and Review* had a five-drawer letter-size file full of photographs in this last category. They were of early Decatur scenes and early prominent residents, taken between the 1890's and about 1920. Many were brown, torn or fragile. It was increasingly important to copy or preserve them in some way if they were to be of future use. It seemed practical that they could be microfilmed as well and at less cost than a staff photographer could copy each individual photograph.

Our objectives in microfilming the photos were:

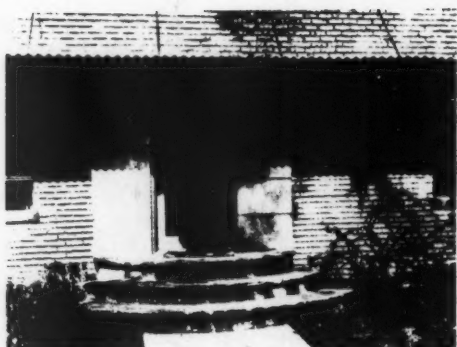
1. to preserve them;
2. to save space by filing small negatives rather than the large prints;
3. to keep historical material in an active file instead of in an inactive file where this fragile material might be forgotten.

University Microfilms decided it could re-photograph these pictures on either 35mm or 70mm film, make contact identification prints on paper, and provide transparent covers for the negatives. The 70mm film would cost about 7 cents per photo, and the prints an additional 4 cent each. This was cheaper than a staff photographer could copy them.

Other costs included our staff time for preparation of the pictures, typing classifications on covers or envelopes, alphabetizing and filing, and postage charges.

In preparing the photographs we noticed that some had insufficient identification. Our library staff saved about 2,000 of the photos and completed the identification on them. A photo was marked "Historical" if it were, or "Save" if it

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MICROCOSM is a publication of University Microfilms, with central offices at 313 North First Street, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

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#### NEWSPAPER PICTURE FILES

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were important enough to keep, so that in the future these negatives would not be thrown away. On individuals' photographs we tried to build up short biographies. On subject photos we tried to include a brief history of the building or event in addition to information in the newspaper at the time the photo was first used.

The success of microfilming photographs of this type depends on the type of film, the type of developer, and the type of paper used for prints, as in any photographic process. Some quality is sacrificed in quantity copying. Although the camera setting and film used allow for some variation in size and quality of individual exposures, some detail is lost in any copy work. The film used has a longer gray scale than that generally used for microfilming, and the developer used was a relatively soft developer. Copies were made at 1/4 reduction, which is the smallest practical reduction with microfilm equipment.

Although the project is still in an experimental stage because we have not actually used any of the microfilm negatives, our photographers tell us that it will be an easy matter to make prints from our 70mm negatives.

Miss Henebry is librarian at the Decatur (Ills.) Herald and Review. This report on her experiences with a microfilm of a portion of her newspaper's picture file is an outgrowth of a panel discussion in which Miss Henebry participated in the Newspaper division of the Special Library Association last summer. A more complete version of her report appears in the December 1956 issue of *Special Libraries*. □

#### POETRY

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Many of these poets have been published first in *Poetry*; some had been published abroad but were unknown in the United States; almost all of them owe to *Poetry* an opportunity for early recognition in this country. *Poetry's* alertness to new talent of whatever school has been astonishing, its percentage of winners almost incredible.

But *Poetry* has been more — though nothing more important — than a market for poets and a parade-ground for talent. It has not limited its pages to poems, but has interpreted and celebrated poetry through its news, reviews, and criticism. From the first it has kept its readers in touch with new movements, ideas, and modes in the art, such as imagism, free verse, "objectivism," surrealism, "proletarian" writing, and "regional" writing. Through its notices of significant translations from foreign poets, new and old, it has reminded its readers that poetry is a world-wide activity with achievements and potentialities outside the English tradition. Its reviews have been more sensitive to experiment, more attentive to technique, and better informed than those most readers could find elsewhere. It has offered and presented many prizes to poets and opened up to the winners new avenues for publication: In this country poets have often been isolated in small towns or rural districts; *Poetry* has brought them into touch with each other.

Along with the excitement of reading the new work of the best poets, early readers must have been stimulated by the seriousness with which *Poetry* took poetry as an art. "Don't imagine," wrote Ezra Pound from London in an early issue, "that the art of poetry is any simpler than the art of music, or that you can please the expert before you have spent at least as much effort on the art of verse as the average piano teacher spends on the art of music." In this spirit *Poetry* helped to make poets more exacting, more professional. Louise Bogan says of her first reading of *Poetry* in high school, "one of its reiterated lessons — that poetry is an art — has been passed over by my other mentors."

In 1912 Miss Harriet Monroe had expected that she could depend upon the subscriptions of 2500 libraries and several thousand readers. Yet she never managed to build up a subscription list of more than 3000, and usually it was smaller. From time to time *Poetry* has had to appeal for gifts from friends and subscribers. It has never been able to depend on continued publication. "*Poetry* is now forty-three years old," said Allen Tate last year. "But its vitality is as great, and its usefulness is greater than it has ever been.... If *Poetry* disappeared I should be tempted to mark the end of an epoch, but I should not assume that a new epoch was about to begin."

Professor Hill is a member of the English Department at the University of Michigan. His particular interest is modern poetry.

A complete run of *Poetry* is available on microfilm. Volumes 1-73 sell for \$175.00 the set. More recent volumes, about \$2.35 each to subscribers. □

## MATHEMATICAL TABLES APPLICABLE TO POLYMERIC ELECTROLYTES

By Frederick T. Wall and Joan Berkowitz

A problem of considerable interest to those concerned with the physical chemistry of polymers is that of the ionization of polymeric electrolytes. Of particular importance in this connection is the extent of counter ion binding by polymeric ions. Recently, a number of theoretical calculations applicable to polymeric electrolytes were completed by the authors of this note, using the Illiac, an electronic digital computer at the University of Illinois. The calculations involved the numerical solution of the Poisson-Boltzmann equation for spherical polymeric ions in an environment of smaller ions. From the solutions so obtained, it is possible to relate ionic dimensions and charge densities to counter ion binding. About 125 tables of data have been prepared for various values of the significant parameters applicable to the problem.

Details of the computations and the theoretical significance thereof appear in the *Journal of Chemical Physics*, 26, 114 (1957). The tables of data, which do not appear elsewhere, are available through University Microfilms. The price is \$2.00.

*Professor Wall and Miss Berkowitz performed their research at Noyes Chemical Laboratory, University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois. Miss Berkowitz is now at the Sterling Chemical Laboratory, Yale University.* □

## MICROFILM AS A PUBLISHING MEDIUM

The beauty of microfilm publishing lies solely and simply in the fact that it makes it possible to perform the publishing function for small markets at prices no greater than those which are made possible by all the economies and efficiencies of the most modern of technologies used in reaching large markets. Microfilm is the only publishing medium which can economically and efficiently provide editions of one on demand.

The publishing function! Just exactly what is it? To publish is, literally, to make public. In this sense of the word a gossip, a lecturer, a broadcaster — anyone who does the opposite of concealing information — is a publisher. But publishing usually involves more than the setting up of meaningful sound waves for the benefit of the ear. It is the setting up of many sets of light waves for the benefit of the eye. It is propagating. It is the multiplication of copy — the making of many versions of the copy where originally there was only one. This propagating function is inherent in publishing.

Communication is a universal process. The mechanisms by which it is achieved are as varied and dissimilar as drum signals and the *Reader's Digest*, or facial mimicry and television, or Braille and the finger language of the

deaf and dumb. Microfilm publishing is merely one communicative mechanism.

All animals are possessed of sensory organs by means of which they obtain or receive stimuli from outside of their own bodies. These are the organs of the five senses. Among the lower animals these organs may merely function as receivers of conditions and circumstances, as when the chemotropic amoeba moves in the direction of what it considers to be good and away from that which it judges — if amoebae judge — to be bad. But with the higher animals, and pre-eminently with man, a meaningful sign or sound becomes the means of influencing the possessor of a separate nervous system. The possessor of one nervous system, by sound or sign or action, influences the possessor of another nervous system. The one sets up a stimulus; the other responds to that stimulus. The space between the two nervous systems is bridged. That distance may be one of time or space. It may be both. The stimuli set up by Aristotle still have their responses today, more than two thousand years later.

This is the publishing function — the bridging of the gap between a stimulator and a respondent. It is this and nothing more than this. It is this function that microfilm performs. It is an understanding of this function that places modern ink-print publishing in proper perspective. □

## A NEW GUIDE TO THE FILM SERIES PUBLISHED FOR AMERICAN PERIODICALS

As part of the service policy of University Microfilms, all subscribers to the American Periodicals series have recently been sent a consolidated index to American periodicals of the 18th century and to those published thus far on microfilm in the 1800-1850 series. The index gives complete information as to titles of the periodicals, dates of publication represented in the microfilms series, and the number of the reels on which the various periodicals may be found. This is the tenth year of publication of the 1800-1850 series.

Non-subscribers who wish copies of this index may have a copy on request. The price to non-subscribers is \$2.00. The price of the microfilm series is \$450.00 per year for approximately 100,000 pages. Separate reels are \$15.00 each. □

## NEW CATALOGUE TO BE PUBLISHED

Before the next issue of *MICROCOSM* is published University Microfilms will have its new 1957 catalogue of microfilms off the press and in the hands of librarians.

All *MICROCOSM* subscribers, as well as a number of libraries not receiving this publication regularly, will receive our list. Others may have it on request. □



## THE IMAGE ON THE SCREEN

By Eugene Power

A recurrent question from subscribers concerns the quality of a micro-image on film as opposed to the quality of that same image on photographic paper.

There are several reasons why the positive film image is superior, but the important ones are tied up with what photographic technicians call "scatter."

Both film (prints on positive film, usually in roll form) and cards (prints on photographic paper) begin as negative microfilm. Given the same master negative microfilm, the positive micro-image on film is better than one on paper because there is less scatter of light in the making of the positive print and in its projection.

Positive print film consists of an acetate base impregnated with an anti-halation dye (to stop reflection), and a front surface coated with the emulsion in which the photographic image is formed. Positive print paper consists of about the same elements, on card stock rather than on acetate.

To make a positive print on either medium the photosensitive material is held in contact with the negative image, and light is passed through the negative to the emulsion on the positive stock. This exposure to light is called printing.

When the paper stock is printed there is some reflection from the card stock base, which scatters the light. The resulting image is therefore not as crisp and sharp as the corresponding image on film. Of course there is some scatter when

printing on film, too, but it is much less a problem.

In the final analysis it is the quality of the image as projected in a microfilm viewer that is important, and the reader cares about nothing else.

Generally speaking, the simplest type of reader is the most effective, and direct projection (as in the Eastman Kodagraph MPE) is the simplest. In this system the image is projected directly on to a white opaque screen. There is little opportunity for the scatter of light.

Projection on to an opaque screen is also possible with photographic cards, but only by reflection. Light goes *through* film but must be *reflected* from cards. Reflection introduces additional opportunities for the light to scatter, and as a result the image is somewhat blurred when compared to direct projection through film. The light source for cards must be at an oblique angle to the face of the cards and this further complicates the viewing mechanism and the scatter problem.

Viewing machines which project the image onto ground glass screens introduce additional opportunities for scatter. In any glass screen type of reader one must look directly into the light; surely a discomfort for most people. While the Fresnel lens helped to distribute the light evenly over such a surface, it introduces the added inconveniences of forcing the user to sit directly in front of the screen, and a slight movement to either side results in a sharp decrease in image quality.

In his quest for additional library materials the librarian must not neglect the aspect of micro-reading most important to his clients — the quality of the image on the screen. □

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